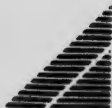
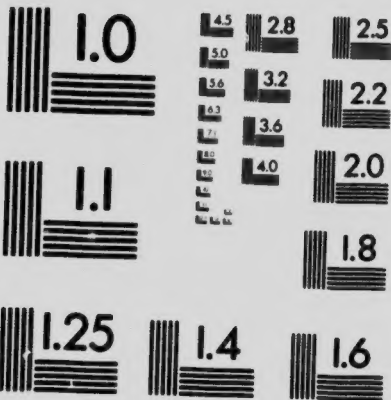


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PAPERS FOR WAR TIME. No. 6

Active Service

The Share of the Non-Combatant

By

W. R. MALTBY

Price Twopence

HUMPHREY MILFORD

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

GREAT BRITAIN is engaged in a war from which, as we believe, there was offered to our nation no honourable way of escape. The desire of all who love their country is to serve it in the hour of its need, and so to live and labour that those who have fallen in its service may not have died in vain. While this may suffice to make immediate duty clear, the war remains in the deepest sense a challenge to Christian thought. The present bitter struggle between nations which for centuries have borne the Christian name, indicates some deep-seated failure to understand the principles of Christ and to apply them to human affairs.

This series of papers embodies an attempt to reach, by common thought, discussion, and prayer, a truer understanding of the meaning of Christianity and of the mission of the Church to the individual, to society, and to the world.

Those who are promoting the issue of these papers are drawn from different political parties and different Christian bodies. They believe that the truth they seek can be attained only by providing for a measure of diversity in expression. Therefore they do not accept responsibility for the opinions of any paper taken alone. But in spirit they are united, for they are one in the conviction that in Christ and in His Gospel lies the hope of redemption and health for society and for national life.

ACTIVE SERVICE: THE SHARE OF THE NON COMBATANT

IN this year of our Lord 1914 the foremost nations of the world have armed twelve millions of men for a life and death struggle, the most colossal the world has ever seen, and the Government publication which describes its origin traces it back to a murder at Sarajevo. The shells that fall night and day over the trenches are in reality bursting far away in innocent homes, where women wait for tidings and little children do not understand—because an Archduke was murdered at Sarajevo. What have we to do with Austrian Archdukes or Sarajevo? Four months ago many of us would have said, Nothing. To-day events answer for us, Everything. In the terrible language of war we are being taught the lesson of the solidarity of the world. There is no such thing now as a nation allowed to go its own way and meddle with nobody. In the world as it is to-day we simply cannot leave one another alone. The international contacts are so intimate, the interests so inextricably involved, the contagion of good and evil so swift and incalculable that no member can suffer without all the body suffering, and any local inflammation may threaten the life of the whole.

Of course it was not only the murder at Sarajevo that

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brought this train of evil consequence. The miscreant who threw his brand had a powder barrel to throw it into. It does not matter much whether we regard that crime as the occasion or as only the pretext of the war. Even a pretext must have some relevance to the situation, and the international situation was unstable because it was fundamentally immoral. As we pursue the search for causes, we find the circle of responsibility widening, and are led back from causes political to causes that are moral. To accept the policy of armaments to which all the nations have been committed, to believe that the only way to be safe was to be dangerous—this, we see, was to build civilization on the sides of a volcano ; it was to confess that the states of the world had exhausted their moral capital. The rivalries, the jealousies and suspicions, the ambitions and covetings of the world, these were real to us ; these therefore were organized, mobilized in armies and assembled in guns. But the moral forces of the world, the nobler loyalties, have not been mobilized ; not because it was impossible, but because we did not believe in them sufficiently to make the attempt. If a hundredth part of the toil and wealth now spent in prosecuting war had been spent earlier in preventing it, who believes that to-day the situation would be what it is ?

We may well thank God that Britain has no immediate responsibility for this war. Our Government strove to the utmost for peace, and only entered into war under the compulsion of obligations the most sacred and

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undeniable. But if we consider the moral background from which all this trouble has arisen, we see that Britain had a position of peculiar privilege and responsibility among the nations. We were not preoccupied about our frontiers, as they were. We had no enormous conscript armies, and our own militarists, though of quite a hot brand, were not so numerous but that we could keep them in tolerable order. We had an empire of such magnitude that only a lunatic would desire to add to it. All our interests were the interests of peace, and this is true even although it has often been officially said. Yet *there was no real peace*, and the winning of peace was a cause far too sacred and too intimately every man's concern to be left to one or two statesmen or to a handful of humanitarians, far too difficult of achievement to be pursued by casual or spasmodic efforts.

The very battlefields are telling us that we underrated the moral forces which might have been rallied. Men from half a score of nations are fighting on the same fields to-day. One thing they all have in common. They are all brave. They are all capable of heroism, and hold not their lives dear unto them. Few of us at home have watched their devoted loyalty without a feeling of shame—shame that we have never expected from others nor exacted from ourselves, for the sake of a kingdom of righteousness and peace, a tithe of those sacrifices which men are now making so cheerfully in war. We belong to an age that has given to the enmities of the world an organization of incomparable efficiency, while

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it has left the friends of peace to be cut down in detail. We are all involved in the responsibility for this situation ; and all alike are bound to take a full share in the toil and sacrifice of finding the way out.

Every young man of serviceable age has been told during these last weeks that his king and country need him, and he has reason to believe that it is true. He has therefore been obliged either to enlist or to give to himself good reasons for not doing so. There are such reasons. Some men are physically unfit : some have responsibilities to others which, unless the situation becomes desperate, point them their duty at home. Some, and they are not members of the Society of Friends alone, have convictions, not born of yesterday nor obeyed without cost to-day, that forbid them to take up arms. The point now insisted on, however, is that every man who does not enlist must have some good reason to give himself for being a non-combatant, or in his heart he knows that he is a deserter. A young man, waking up to resume a more or less irresponsible existence, finds before he has eaten his breakfast that he is faced with a peremptory demand to offer his life, and he knows that to disobey that summons would be dishonour. Yet, after all, it is not his quarrel any more than it is mine. If the things for which he is sent to fight are won, they are won for me just as much as for him—supposing that he survives to see them won. If, because I am 39, or because I am blind of one eye, or because the doctor detects improper noises in my heart,

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cannot go to the front, may I pay my neighbour two shillings a day to go and be shot in my place, and then call it quits? Christian people are familiar with the great plea that if One died for all, those who live must no longer live unto themselves. The argument received its supreme application in the Cross of Christ, but it appeals to a sense of honour deep in the general heart of man. If other people lay down their lives for us, our lives are forfeit; we are not our own: we are bought with a price.

Most people do not need to argue about this; they simply know it. Now they want their leaders to help them to carry their conviction into effect. The great national task is one, but manifold. Fighting abroad, the adjustment of social wrongs at home, the healing of international schisms, the revival of religion, pure and undefiled, all these are parts of the one campaign. Could we now open booths where men and women might enlist for one branch of the national service or another, we might enroll half the population of Great Britain, and the recruits would accept any reasonable discipline that the service involved.

The men who organize war understand their business. When a recruit is enlisted he is not left in doubt as to what he is to do. He takes the oath, he is subject to rigorous discipline, and though the service asked of him from time to time is hard and often perilous, it is at any rate definite, and he is not invited to reconsider his offer every warm afternoon, or each cold night. But

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the man to whom it falls to give his equivalent in non-military ways has no such help. Though he wants to offer himself seriously for whatever service he can render, there is no recognized authority to swear him in, or to assign him his duties. Not only at some critical moment, but all along, day in and day out, he must be prepared to take the initiative. If in the time of his country's need he is to be sure that he is not at heart a deserter, it may be necessary for him to set up his own recruiting station, frame his own discipline, swear himself in, and be rigorous in exacting from himself the stipulated service. It is not within the scope of this paper to indicate in detail what such services might be. We are occupied for the moment with things more fundamental. But in this present travail of the nations, with unthinkable peril at our very doors, if we can do nothing unusual, make no forced march, fetch up no reserves, we are dishonoured. Some parts of our duty are clear.

THE SWEARING-IN

We ought to make an explicit and decisive start. If we neglect this, the momentum of the conventional and the habitual will be too strong for us. All the moralists tell us that if we want to make any fundamental change in our ways we must launch ourselves upon the adventure with all possible force and definiteness, so that even the subconscious regions of our nature may be certified that they are under new orders, and must behave accordingly. Slovenly reformations are soon spent. It was

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a custom with a certain order of knights, when a new candidate was to be admitted, to carry him at evening into the church and lay him down on the steps of the altar with his armour beside him. There he was to lie all night alone, as still as a stone, and not until the morning did they return to lift him up, as it were from the dead, and swear him into his new vocation—a new man for a new life. It was good psychology, this taking time to die, this solemn initiation into a new life. We are not all made the same way, but we may be sure that the man who is too slothful or too superior to summon himself to attention, to find some sacred place and fitting time for a grave and deliberate dedication of himself to the service of others, is likely in the end to offer, not the non-combatant's equivalent, but only the shirker's excuse.

THE DISCIPLINE

The non-combatant must submit to discipline, and, if necessary, frame his own. Current events are telling us that our civilization has outrun its moral resources. Musketry instructors say that the rifle has improved out of all proportion to the man behind it, and it is a parable. Our material progress and our mastery of the inanimate world have brought us up against great international and social problems, which it is most perilous to neglect; yet there is not in the world wisdom enough or goodwill to solve them. We have come to a stage where mankind cannot even hold the ground it

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has gained without a large accession of moral and spiritual power. The vaster issues of this time demand that the normal man shall be a more thoughtful and self-forgetful creature than he at present is. The ancient commandments of love to God and to our neighbour return upon us with extraordinary urgency of appeal to-day. To those high demands many are now eager to respond so far as they may, but the impulse will fail unless they commit themselves to soldierly pledges and secure themselves against lower moods by imposing on themselves a strict but voluntary discipline in the use and training of their powers and the spending of their time.

If the non-combatant's service is to be in any way commensurate with that of the men who stand all day in the trenches, with the shrapnel whistling above their heads, he must have himself well in hand. He must know what his post is, so that he may know when he is tempted to desert it, and reduce his life to order as one who remembers that he is on crusade. He must cease saying he has no time, must find or frame his discipline and hold to it; and in most cases (so the present writer believes) he must get it down on paper, even if he burns the paper as soon as he has got it by heart.

THE CAMPAIGN

The non-combatant must plan his campaign. It is often said of the present conflict that we are fighting to cancel militarism. Now militarism is a very ancient

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bird of prey, and it was not hatched by Treitschke or by any modern mind. Militarism is an idea, and a mighty one too; it cannot be destroyed by a negation, but only by a greater and truer idea which casts it out. If the victory is to be worth having, this nobler peace must be signed in the enemy's capital, that is, in the willing minds of men. If this is the campaign to which we are sworn, one need not ask a nobler. If we wished to define it, perhaps the only adequate terms would be those which are both simple and religious, and it calls for all that a man has or is. From the keeping of his own heart to the least of his secular activities, all that he does may be part of the campaign, and every moment of fidelity is a contribution to the forces that will bring victory to the whole line.

(a) It is therefore poor strategy to disparage or forsake the familiar forms of service in which many have been engaged, in order to have something to do with the war. Those who, one way or another, have been befriending the poor, teaching the young, tending the sacred lamps, sharing knowledge and privilege with those who have them not, need not abandon their tasks in order to learn bandaging or to knit socks. The new dedication will dignify the old service, and teach them new insight and fortitude in rendering it. We hear of a business firm which sent a large and glittering subscription to the Relief Fund, and the same week put its employees upon half-pay. What we think of that kind of thing should put us on guard against the dishonour of

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neglecting our ordinary and more permanent obligations for the emergency help which the newspapers prescribe.

(b) Many are uneasy about their luxurious spending, and have made resolutions to live simpler lives. But they have scarcely begun their attempt before they are told that their well-meant retrenchments will do more harm than good, and every one importunes them to go on spending. This they have no difficulty in doing : it is the easy way, but it is not the campaigner's way. He knows that a greater simplicity is not merely an emergency expedient, but a permanent rule for the nation's moral health ; he knows that it is part of the duty of the hour to understand the connection between luxury and social waste, to make a stand against the multiplication of accessories, and to keep a good conscience about the things which the nation cannot afford, and which it is therefore not seemly for himself to enjoy.

(c) On the same principle of beginning where we are, it will be the duty of many to look round the circle of their kindred and see what new obligations and opportunities this time may bring them. To revive forgotten kinships, and get within hailing distance of those of our own blood from whom we may have drifted, will be a real contribution to that better solidarity which is to be. We were content before the war to wonder how Cousin Jane was doing ; now we had better go and see for ourselves, and not wait until Cousin Jane flies signals of distress.

(d) Going on to a wider circle, it must be part of the

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campaign that employers and employed should review their relations with one another, and make steady and adequate efforts at readjustment. It is well known that serious labour troubles threatened the land this autumn, and that the industrial situation had many analogies to the international situation before the war. There was the same despair of moral forces, the same acceptance of the doctrine of force, the same preparation for war during a troubled and nominal peace, each side sharpening its sword for the coming struggle. To-day the common peril has drawn the rival interests together and given a respite which it would be criminal not to use. The mobilization of capital and labour into hostile armies tends to limit the freedom of the individual, and tempts him to say that there is nothing that any one person can do. This is what any soldier *might* say, but it is what no good soldier *will* say. Sooner or later a disastrous industrial war is sure to come unless there is found sufficient justice, forbearance, and mutual sympathy to establish a 'just and lasting peace'. Each one in his place is bound to do what he can *now* to add to the common stock of those saving things, to christianize the relation between employers and employed, to give and invite confidence, to strive for an understanding, to make ventures, and even dangerous ventures, in doing as he would be done by.

(e) The nation must soon expect to see wide distress, which can be alleviated only by organizing the men and women of goodwill to deal with it. Some such

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organization did exist : some is now being hurriedly improvised ; and the process is not without its irritations. The eager volunteer collides with the expert and each gives his opinion of the other in private. Some idle people have become suddenly important and officious, and it is not easy for others to work with them or under them. There are many different agencies at work, but they are imperfectly co-ordinated and they are often ignorant, sometimes impatient, of each other's existence. All this means a good deal of waste and vexation, and Mr. Pliable will have fine reasons to give for going home. But those who have taken the soldier's oath will stay to see things through, serving with prosaic committees it may be, working with such machinery as there is and studying to improve it. They will try to humanize the administration of social help, and use the opportunity to cut permanent channels of intercourse and sympathy between the severed sections of the commonwealth.

(f) No organization, however, even if it were much more perfect than it is likely to be, will dispense with the need for the personal vigilance and initiative of every good soldier in this campaign. There is a world of need and misery around which baffles us by its inaccessibility, near as it is, while our casual and amateur attempts are often ignominiously repulsed. But those who are under soldierly discipline will not accept defeat : they will learn from those who have done better, lay new plans, and return again, to find at last a way through the enemy's lines and carry succour to the victims of social

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injustice or moral defeat. Probably if we sat down to ponder this one question, Whom can I help? nine out of ten would discover somebody in need whom otherwise we should have overlooked until help was too late.

THE COMRADESHIP

It was said above that when the non-combatant would offer his equivalent there was no recognized authority to swear him in. To leave this unqualified would be almost to deny the Church of Christ, which is surely in the world for that very purpose. If the Church is taken unawares by this tremendous emergency, and scarcely knows sometimes how to receive and put to account what the individual is willing to give, it is nevertheless true that one need not look in vain to the Christian Church for that comradeship without which we are all very helpless in this campaign. Among the good things that may be won out of the heart of this evil is a new federation of the men and women of Faith and Goodwill, and a new frankness in the fellowship that binds them. The root cause of this war, as we have seen, is to be found in the shortage of moral and spiritual resources and in the failure to mobilize and concentrate those we had. There was not love enough in the world to keep it sweet: there was not understanding and sympathy and magnanimity enough to keep it safe. But He who gives to men liberally will not deny us these necessary things, and they spring up in abundance wherever men are not afraid to confess that they are in quest of a better

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time, nor afraid to ask others to help them. Some are deterred by the sense of their own limitations, and some who have often suffered spiritual defeat in their own battle are shy of offering their dishonoured sword for the greater campaign. But they must leave that with Him who now commands their service, who gives power to the faint, and has long known how to make good soldiers out of very unpromising material. And they should remember that when men act *together*, in the way of friendship, for any great ideal, each man's personality is vastly enhanced and all kinds of impossibilities must change their name. However ineffectual in ourselves, we are each one summoned to that wide army which under God is destined to conquer the world. To have had no place in that host of the Lord—will it not be the final dishonour?

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